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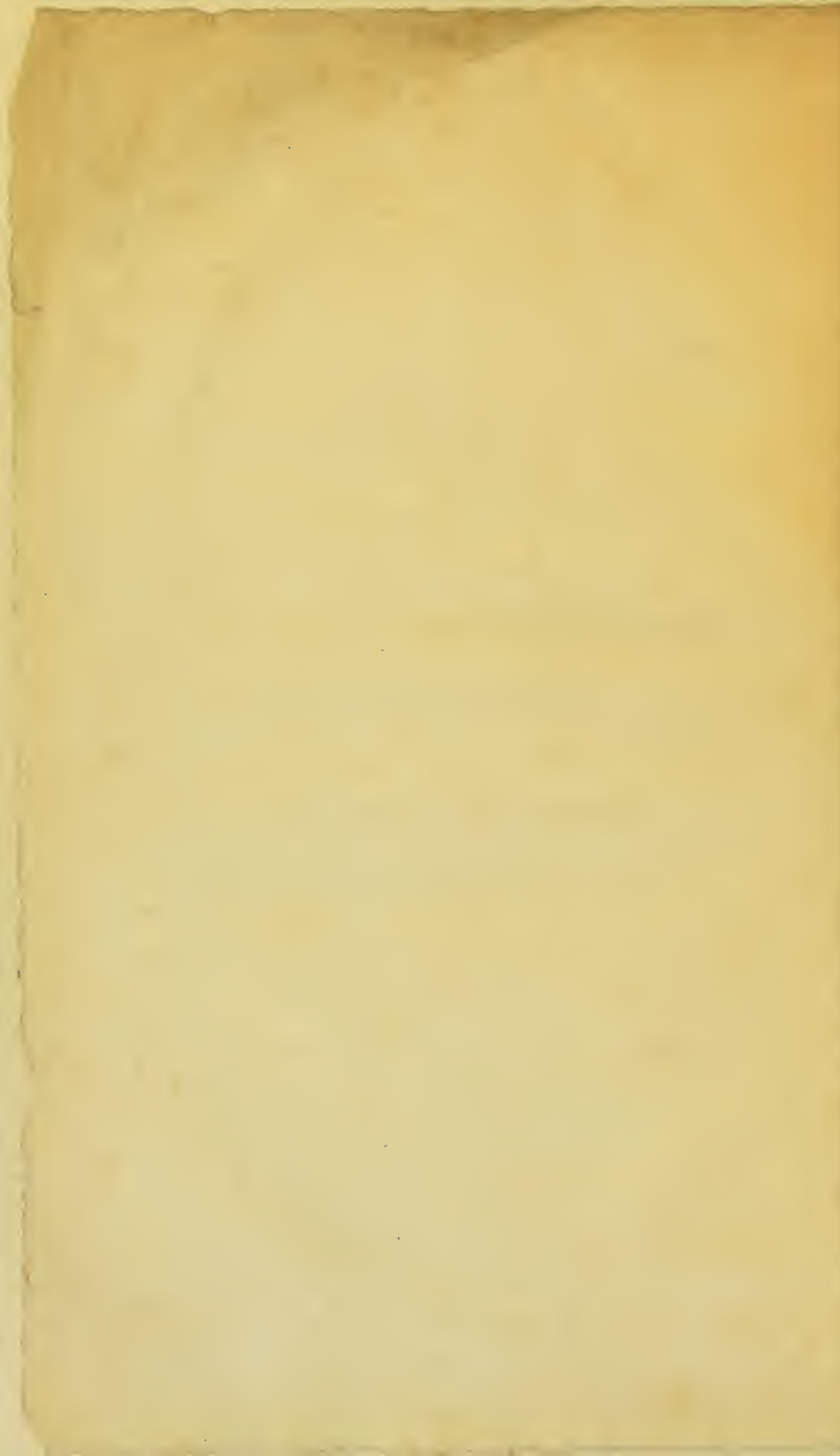


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**CATON'S**  
**POPULAR REMARKS**  
**ON**  
**NERVOUS, HYPOCHONDRIAC, AND HYSTERICAL**  
**DISEASES:**  
**WITH**  
**OBSERVATIONS ON SUICIDE.**



# POPULAR REMARKS

MEDICAL AND LITERARY,

ON

*NERVOUS, HYPOCHONDRIAC, AND HYSTERICAL*

## DISEASES:

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED,

OBSERVATIONS ON SUICIDE,

WITH

*AN ATTEMPT TO DELINEATE THE SOUL AND ITS CHARACTER.*

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From thee, great God, we spring, to thee we tend,  
Path, motive, guide, original and end.

JOHNSON

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By T. M. CATON, SURGEON,

LATE OF THE UNITED HOSPITALS OF ST. THOMAS'S AND GUY'S.

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## P R E F A C E.

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I AM induced to offer this abridgement of a Publication I have for some time been engaged upon, for the purpose of exciting a more extended investigation into the character and theory of a class of diseases, whose pathology is not yet reduced to mathematical precision ; depending, as they do, upon the nerves and the cerebral organ, and until we acquire more intimate knowledge of their functions, I fear we must rest satisfied on the subject ; therefore my object will be attained, should I be so fortunate as to induce some friend to science to further pursue these prolific themes.

10. *Stanhope Street, Newcastle Street,*  
*London.*





## INTRODUCTION.

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THE study of medicine as a general science is now universally admitted to be one, no less instructive than necessary, one in which the highest and most important objects of rational life are blended together: in fact, in no science is a spirit of investigation and observation more to be desired than in physic; for to alleviate the unavoidable sufferings of humanity is our first and most important duty, a duty inseparable with our station in society: even placing this interesting study out of the scale of its general and acknowledged utility, I contend, to the inquisitive and contemplative mind it is capable of yielding all the elements of brilliant science, by the novelty, beauty, magnificence, and variety of its objects. Who, with cold stoic indifference, can trace the circulation of the blood, investigate the agency of atmospheric air on animal life, traverse through all the varied systems of the human body, appreciate their mutual connection and dependance, and say to himself, in these regions of metaphysical inquiry I can glean no knowledge practically useful to me? Varied in its thousand ramifications, it is attended, immediately or remotely, with all the sister arts; in fact, it leads intuitively the mind from nature to nature's God,

—*in omnium animis Deorum notionem impressit ipsa natura*,—and indelible implants on the heart that fascinating and sublime veneration of his power and existence, that throws the materialist and atheist back to their native chaos.

It is greatly to be lamented, that in a science so essential to our individual happiness, so little progress has been made. The system which Lord Bacon pointed out, recommending a cautious manner of close induction from a train of apposite facts, has too generally in medicine given place to the unsolid fabric of theoretical imagery, and the luminous deceptions of unfolding genius ; hence the principles of medicine have been too often reared on the superstructure of conjecture, which points out the theory without the mode of its practical application ; and thus, like “ the fleeting visions of pleasure’s soft vicissitudes,” its varied systems, wanting the harmony of correct deductions, and the sheet anchor of practical inference, have gone the bright circlet of ephemeral fame to amuse, but not instruct.

Disease is to be generally defined that state of frame opposite to a healthy action of its varied functions ; and the practice of physic, abstractedly considered, consists in a just discrimination of one disease from another ; and the office of the physician consists in seeing with precision the nature of disease, and applying with accuracy the remedies necessary for its removal : nosology points to him the means by which that is rationally to be attained, pathology the doctrine of the cause and na-

ture of disease, and therapeutics the means by which healthy action is to be restored, and the application of those means ; yet the essential character of disease is only to be drawn from symptoms, and these symptoms occurring from a very different and opposite state of the general system, according as unexpected incidents arise, possess no certain or determined character, because the diseases incident to our frame are so varied, even in individuals of the same temperature, as to leave much to doubt and uncertainty ; so that the symptoms from which we are to draw our idea of the character of the disease, are so opposite in their nature, that no positive information can be gathered from them. In fact, in diseases of doubtful character, it often occurs that one physician will deny the existence of a disease another has affirmed upon equal ground of knowledge and experience did exist.

In the midst of difficulty, so delicate and complicated, and where unexpected obstacles perpetually arise, it is necessary here to observe, in order to solve a problem so paradoxical as that just stated, that one disease will make another subordinate to its action, and change not only its character but seat of action, so that the original part affected gets well, and that organ that took on the secondary action as a consequence, whether from sympathy or any other cause, remains the only part affected ; for disease and its consequences not only differ in their character, but also in the circuit of their action, and during that circuit the silent de-



rangement of organization will have proceeded so far as to have obliterated a portion of original structure, and adhesion arrests its further progress. Dissection exhibits various examples of this character; the lungs, that organ which elaborates the oxygenous principle of the blood, and renders it fit for respiration, very frequently during the period of diseased action, adheres to *pleura costalis membrane*, and thus gives a new character to the disease. Again, the liver is also placed by disease in the same situation, and the misfortune is here, that very great and considerable mischief may have existed for some indefinite period before the evil is announced. The animal body is a pure machine, and all its operations and phenomena, with their several changes, are the consequent result of organization and structure, and therefore subservient to the new arrangement a diseased action produces. Thus theory succeeds theory, and happy I say, in the language of the eloquent Darwin, is that patient, whose physician possesses the best theory, the proof of which lies in the removal of the disease.

For a moment suppose this confusion of the doctrines of disease removed, how are we to place implicit confidence in the effects of our remedies, of the actual operation of which we know nothing? The daily history of remedies points out to us the production of a certain effect, more or less extended in its action, but the means by which that action on the system is effected we have yet to learn; nor are we less happy in the administration of our re-



medics, for how frequently do they produce an effect diametrically opposite to that intended ; thus exposing our practice to difficulty, and its consequent companion, error. In this stage of our advance to improvement, who will contend it is not open to a spirit of liberal enquiry, and which enquiry, however feeble and limited in effort, may yet lead to results beneficial to science and humanity? Here it should also be premised, that in unravelling many apparent difficulties, and in attempting to trace the true cause of existing disease, we must recollect that our practice must be made unequivocally subservient to the opposite condition produced by health and disease ; nor must the energy of investigation sleep when we recall to our recollection that the human body, so susceptible to change in different situations and circumstances, undergoes many erratic changes, and assumes a great and distinguishing variety of aspects, which in their progress materially affect both the animal and mental system.

Indeed the increase of disease appears to me to identify itself with the peculiar period in which we live, and which has destined man to a partnership in its revolution ; nor can this be denied by any class, however singular it appears, but by those individuals who place happiness in cultivation of intellect, and make it dependent on refinement ; forgetting, in the floating sweep of their novel and misguided benevolence, that civilization no less corrupts than harmonizes the human mind, and hence is inapplicable both to the circumstances,

wants, and energies of man. The Utopian idea of universal education, a theory beautiful, interesting, and captivating on first view, appears, on mature reflection, pregnant with every discordant element that can agitate man's sensitive frame, and ultimately will produce the very mischief it is intended to shield us from, arming him with powers beyond his feeble management, the ponderous weight of which cripples his native faculties, and assumptive ones, far less under his limited jurisdiction, arise in their place, and give birth and nutriment to passions beyond the controul of his reason and reflection; and thus leaves him on the fluctuating tide of time, the sport and indiscriminate victim of fierce and desperate contingencies, that will in their final denouncement totally change the character of society; accompanied with new difficulties, new habits, and new prejudices, and of which, even in this age of intellect, no adequate idea can be drawn. Perhaps to those causes, separate or combined, is to be referred the increase and unhappy result of those diseases we suppose depend on the influence of the mind; the gloomy, hideous picture they disclose of human nature, invites to further inquiry as to the cause and character of them, in hopes of ameliorating their effect. Much indeed remains to be explained on this subject: as to the character of the brain itself, as far as physical probability goes, we are induced to infer that it is that point of the system from whence the sentient principle ramifies its action by the medium of the nerves to external objects. Here and

there an isolated individual may be found, who considers those functions that constitute animal action, the mere but immediate dependants of organization, and that mental action, or sensation, is only the result of the animal economy ; for on dissection, no part they maintain can be found convenient for the residence of such a principle, and smile at the idea of either the *glandula pinealis*, *corpora striata*, *thalamus nervorum opticorum*, *corpus callosum*, or the *quadragemini*, being at all interested with that principle. The feasibility of such deductions I leave to the materialist, with all its *moral* advantages. Of the connection that exists between the organization of the brain and the mental principle we have no guide to direct us, so that the operation of sensation, and the mental principle, as well as their properties, elude our most minute enquiry : but who for a moment can really suppose *mind* to be nothing but a mere secretion of the brain, and that retention, or memory, is the mechanic result of impressions produced on particles of the brain. Does not the phenomena of delirium, concussion, compression, or extravasation, controvert this ; for with diseases of the brain is not the mind affected ? The analysis of these points, and the peculiar character that feeling assumes in each individual, would open a new and untrodden field of investigation, and lead to conclusions that would for ever silence such visionary sceptics, and their problematic systems. Who, looking to cause and effect, can for a moment let doubt cloud his intellect, respecting the



general admitted character of the brain being that organ where the most important functions of the animal body are centered. In fact, every action and impression first operates upon the mind ; the vital principle is then ignited, and the impression follows ; and according to the ideas the mind entertains, it operates upon the system. How gaily speeds the hours when wafted by the breezes of prosperity, how lag they when the winds of adversity propel them forward : it is generally said in these cases that the animal spirits are raised or depressed, but in reality it is only mind ; for the ideas are primarily affected, and in obedience to their temper is the wayward system bent.

A derangement of the brain is often followed by very singular circumstances, such as loss of memory, confusion of ideas, and its attendant debility of intellect. Mr. Ashley Cooper, in his elegant and interesting lecture on injuries of the head, mentions a curious case of a Welchman who was brought into Guy's Hospital with concussion of the brain, and when he recovered it was found he was speaking an apparent unknown language that no one comprehended, and therefore was thought to be delirious ; but it happened a milk-woman came into the ward, and it was found he was speaking his own language, he having entirely forgot the English which he had but lately learned, and did not again acquire it but by study. The nerves, those galvanic conductors of sense and motion, we may also call to our aid, to illustrate the doctrines we are now supporting. Anatomy, that sure guide

in our researches of animal economy, prove that upon tying, compressing, or dividing a nerve in a living body, the muscle to which that nerve goes becomes paralytic ; and if that nerve was endowed with sensation, that sensation ceases, and on untying or removing the compression, its peculiar sensibility returns. If the brain be irritated, convulsions arise all over the animal frame, if any of it is compressed ; that part of the system which has connection with the nerves of the compressed portion, is deprived of its usual action. From these and similar results anatomists have concluded that sensation and motion have their origin from the encephalon and spinal marrow, and from these parts it diverges to all the sentient and irritable points of the system, through the galvanic excitement of the nervous principle. The *modus operandi* of this galvanic sense and motion, the manner and the period the mind takes to convey its action from the brain to the different points of animal structure, and by what method from these parts sensations are carried to this organ, assume a difficulty beyond our enquiry. All that investigation gives on these points amounts to no more than this, that the nerves are the actual agents of our senses ; that bodies applied to peculiar parts of our hydraulic-mechanic machine, produce specific alteration on those identical parts, which changes are carried by an unknown agent to this interesting organ by its unity with the nerves only ; and thus what we term sensation is the result. So it would appear that sensation is a property peculiar

to the nervous fibre, as irritability is to the muscular ; therefore physiologists conclude that nervous fibres ramify over all parts subject to sentient energy, and thus produce that concatenation of mental phenomena, whose diversified and extensive action over matter would certainly appear chimerical, if the history of their development did not at once elucidate its mystic and rapid circulation over the whole system of systems. Much still remains to be said on this fertile subject ; its complicated mechanism, its mysterious process, is not to be analyzed in so short a summary ; connected as the brain is with the subjects of this work, I thought a slight investigation of its peculiar character and dependancies would not be without utility, and in conformity to that idea it will be found I have occasionally recurred to it.



## NERVOUS DISEASES.

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THAT class of disease, which is denominated in general acception nervous, and which evidently depends upon an extreme constitutional sensibility of the system, assumes in development so much eccentricity of action, that to follow the progress of that action through its varied and erratic flight, would occupy volume after volume, without throwing much light upon the subject ; I therefore shall confine myself rather to a general than particular description of it. In fact, nervous diseases are rather modifications of a variety of disease than any specific one, and this is generally understood when we speak of nervous derangement.

The nerves being the ground plan of this subject of enquiry, I presume I shall not far digress from my object, by premising a few introductory observations on this delicate point. All the organs of our complicated frame derive the source of their nourishment from the blood, and the means of exercising their functions from the brain, or ganglionic system. Here I wish to direct the attention also to the consideration of the nerves being the origin of all our sensations, and the universality of their influence upon the whole system, by means of their proper medium the *mind*. Every part of organization, as well as the secretions, are excited,

and maintain an action by the galvanic energy of the cerebral organ ; for of all the organs that congregated towards the completion of our animal mechanism, that most incessantly and laboriously in action is the brain : the principles of vitality ramifying from this as a common centre to the rest of the animal functions, by the aid of the nerves, which may justly be regarded as the conductors of the galvanic fluid ; and it would appear, as far as our limited knowledge of the anatomy and pathology of the brain permits us to draw conclusions, that these galvanic tubes are solely excited into action by the cerebral organ, which, in common with others, is one of secretion. The generality of authors agree in the support of this nervous action, but what is its distinct character, or what propels it into action, or what maintains that action when propelled, no one has yet attempted to explain, either on physical or mechanical principles. We have pretty clear demonstration, that this galvanizing vitality is the actual, primary, and essential cause of sensation and muscular motion ; and after having performed its distinct office of action and re-action, it almost amounts to moral certainty, that its elementary principle is absorbed by the lymphatics, and, combining with the blood in its course, assists its energy and fluidity ; thus contributing to support in its varied ramifications the principal digestions, consonant to the certain and uniform action of vitality : for these nerves are spread over part of organization, no doubt, for the purpose of supporting animal and vital agency, evi-



dently being endowed with properties peculiar to themselves for the maintenance of their specific functions.

Nervous diseases comprehend, in their full range of character, a great feature of disease, and that of a type that frequently identifies itself with existence, as apoplexy, epilepsy, convulsions, and all the minor relatives of this class; and it is a singular feature of this species of disease for one to terminate in another, and that by a rapid transition; thus producing in their progress a peculiarity of mind and constitution so equivocal in character, as to defy the best efforts of moral and physical treatment.

These diseases are either local or general, and exhibit such versatility and phenomena of action, that till we can more accurately demonstrate the physiology of the nervous system, we must be content with rather a general than a specific knowledge of their diseased action. Every symptom of mental and corporeal debility appears to accompany the diminution of nervous energy, under various morbid gradations. In fact, I am led to infer, in this refined age of luxury, dissipation, and ennui, all diseases are more or less nervous, and that no beaten line of treatment can invariably be pursued; for we must be alone directed in our mode of treatment by existing symptoms, rather than in our partiality to this or that remedy, which perhaps may display science, but not practice. Individuals abstracted from the active pursuits of life, those who are the subjects of organic disease, those who

have misapplied their intellectual or corporeal powers, and those in whom reside too great a share of irritability in either constitution, mind, or temper, are alike the objects of its malignant influence, varying in different degrees ; neither does age, time, or circumstance at all govern its action, for as to the period fixed for the commencement of its deleterious development, that appears to be rather under the direction of some slight transitory cause, ignited into action by the depression or anxiety of the sentient faculty beyond its usual standard ; and thus predisposing the cerebral organs to morbid action, disturbs the general system by its connection with nerves, and thus lays the foundation for that high state of irritability which constitutes in general acception nervous excitement.

The symptoms usually attendant on what we may call nervous are weakness of stomach, and the powers of digestion in general, accompanied with extreme flatulence, nausea, palpitations of the heart, sleepiness after dinner, with a lethargic, heavy sensation of dullness and inactivity about the whole frame, and referable to no particular cause or disease ; sudden flushes of heat, succeeded by cold and chilly shivers ; the mind timid and uncertain in its results—to-day flows in all the energy of luxuriant thought, and life is the Bazaar and Eden of hope—to-morrow, the illusion and all its brilliant coruscations are eclipsed by thoughts and imagery equally as hideous ; a thousand fears arise, succeeded by intensity and confusion of ideas, which, in their result, give rise to a volume of eccentric

symptoms, tedious and obstinate in their progress, and very synonymous in their action, and which, in fact, is all symptomatic of a diseased state of the nerves and their digestive functions; and we generally find in our enquiry that individuals of this class have for some period exhibited either hypochondriac or hysteric symptoms, accompanied with a general weakened state of the whole system; and when this debility is once produced, we have not a more difficult symptom to contend against, for in this progress it is always tedious, and acquires an epidemic character; thus fluctuating through all the gradations of diseased action, from single spasm to complicated epilepsy. All nervous diseases, strictly speaking, are for the most part symptoms of other diseases, rather than any definite disease themselves: hence it would be an endless task to enumerate them individually, therefore I shall endeavour to confine myself to its elementary principles, and of course can only here enter into some of its probable causes, among the most prominent of which are sedentary pursuits, indolence, intemperance, anxiety, fatigue, grief, melancholy, moral affections, the intemperate energy of sexual action, or its debasement, tedious chronic affections of any of the internal viscera, profuse evacuations of any character in either sex;—in short, every excitement that predisposes the system to morbid sensibility, every symptom which may contribute to depress the nervous action, or diminish vital power, as well as any other circumstance that disturbs the equilibrium of the cerebral



functions, may be considered as partaking of a share in the exciting cause. These effects appertain to either sex; but with the female, owing to the more delicate symmetry and construction of their frame, the exquisite and refined sensibility of their feelings, and their abstraction from more active pursuits, the symptoms assume a greater degree of sensity and perverseness, and of course require a greater share of attention.

Nervous symptoms being actually confined to neither sex, are not restricted to any period, but are more frequently met with either at the time that the balance of the fluctuating fluids is producing those important changes that spontaneously take place in the animal economy at the period the sensitive passions make their denouncement, or on the commencement of the declension of those secretions, to which the system has been long habituated. Its progress, however, is little governed by the period chosen for its development, for in some individuals it will remain for an indefinite time, while in others again it is rarely absent: but in these individuals its action appears to be maintained by the irregularity of the menstrual discharge in the one sex, and habitual sensual excesses in the other.

There is no disease incident to the fragility of our frame that nervous symptoms will not realise; the weakened action of the digestive functions, and its consequent effect upon the system, peculiarly favour the production of organic disease and chronic symptoms in all the viscera; while the increased ignition of the nervous system no less dis-

poses to those of the more acute type ; there appears to me no doubt to linger on that theory that considers the brain the actual seat of nervous irritation, and the debility of that organ is first manifest in the stomach. Nor should it excite our astonishment, that a disease which depends upon irritability, and is supported by the action of sympathy in the nervous system, derives its exciting cause from inaction of the stomach ; and when once a debility of the stomach takes place, many are the occasional causes that keep up that irritation, from which nervous symptoms may follow. In fact, whatever by quantity or quality relaxes the solids, or by acrimony stimulates into spasms ;— whatever diminishes the energy, or excites irregular action in the animal functions, tends immediately or remotely to produce nervous derangement. Many are its occasional causes ; among that number I shall enumerate the following as the most prominent : suppression or diminution of some accustomed discharge, obstruction in the abdominal viscera, violent passions of the mind, a sudden transition from one condition of life to another. The operation of these causes is of that character, that not unfrequently two or more combine together, and when that is the case, the disease of course is more violent and acute, and less under medicinal controul ; but that which seems more immediately to call into action this nervous irritation, and, when produced, renders it so little subservient to our treatment, is too great an evacuation of the seminal fluids, by whatsoever means

they are excited. No cause or combination of causes produce so much positive injury to the nervous system ; it renders its irritability more susceptible to exterior objects, exhausts the vital functions, and debilitates the whole system of systems. In many cases I have been led to suppose that it was the primary and efficient cause of the derangement, and it also appears to me no less evident, that when nervous debility exists, the nocturnal evacuations are increased, and of course the symptoms are aggravated in a trifold degree.

In regard to the prognostic of these tedious diseases, little can be advanced with any degree of precision, having neither any critical period or regular progression that are exempt from those physical laws that govern less eccentric diseases ; it therefore follows that their termination must depend on contingencies that cannot be provided against. No simple nervous affection ever existed, for they arise from a complex derangement, the combined result of a concatenation of events, that only await an exciting cause to burst into destructive action. This ambiguity of action is never dangerous till it produces organic derangement in some of the thoracic or abdominal viscera, as the lungs, liver, kidneys, &c. &c. ; it then marks its progress with real and tangible symptoms of a diseased action over a nervous, spasmodic, and debilitated frame, and that perhaps at a crisis when the individual expected he should have been in the meridian altitude of strength and vigour ; and I give full credence to their feelings, when they de-



scribe the acuteness with which each symptom rages. That nervous irritability should assume such aameleon type, appears to acquire no character of singularity, when we call to recollection how much they are checquered by opposite indication, and circumstances of a positive, negative, physical, and moral nature. Under an aspect the most favourable, it often assumes an invidious deception ; for while the patient is only suspicious of casual derangement, symptoms of universal debility creep on, and shortly produce decrepitude of vital action, and its attendant melancholy results.

It is the predestined fatality of individuals predisposed to this high state of nervous irritability, however endowed with moral and intellectual dignity, however favourable or elevated their station, to never feel themselves satisfied, discontent links itself to every thing around them—mingle they in the giddy, unthinking vortex of fashion, or seek they the silent groves of the muses,—lived they under an Italian sky, and breathed the serenity of Eden, it would be the same, always hostile to the enjoyment of the present, deploring the past, and anticipating the unpleasing, discordant results of the future ; vicissitude of action and scene equally lose their effect : in fact, they appear more to increase rather than decrease the symptoms. Placed in that turbid, agitated equilibrium, they bear the habiliments of life but to curse its creation and duration ; nor is their's the sleep of health, but that fearful intermitting sleep which closes the eyes from exterior objects to reflect within ; and to a

concurrence of unfriendly events is added an ar-  
dency of mind, that long habits of reflection and  
disappointment predispose to all the impressions of  
doubt and fear, and which the repeated efforts of  
the individuals are inadequate to conquer, and in  
the silence of the midnight hour it ranges, like  
Milton's devil, in all the wanton revels of hell's de-  
voted victims. Attempt to procure sleep, that  
"Sleep that sometimes shuts up sorrow's eye,"  
and you produce a train of symptoms still more hi-  
deous; delirium succeeds, and amid the feverish  
heat of body and of mind, the victim burns on em-  
bers that scorch but destroy not, and the bright  
eye of the universe but beams on him, that he may  
curse himself till night.

In the treatment of a class of disease, where the  
remote and predisposing cause can rarely be traced  
to its source, the condition of the stomach and the  
bowels claim peculiar attention; for the sympathy  
that exists between the mind and the alimentary  
canal is here so clearly defined, that a want of care  
to these points would be attended with no inconsiderable  
inconvenience to our after-mode of treatment; for in the whole range of chronic disease,  
there is none that requires a more indispensable restriction,  
as to the nature of diet, than nervous diseases: for whatever disturbs the stomach affects  
the nervous system, be the symptoms primary or sympathetic. In fact, errors of diet predispose the  
system more than any other cause to a diseased action, and of course claim peculiar attention. As  
a general rule, it should be observed that the more



the strength of the system is generally affected, the lighter should be the food, and of more easy digestion, so that the stomach may not be fatigued too much in that action ; therefore it will always be proper to let the food given be taken frequently, and in small portions. If, on the contrary, the derangement is less extensive, and the vigour of the constitution but little impaired, indulgence may be given with greater safety in the use of solid and more nutritious aliment. The same argument equally holds against the use of aperient medicine, bleeding, cupping, &c., which not only renders diseases of the nerves more obstinate, but of longer duration, producing with it a succession or general routine of diseases, that principally terminate in visceral obstructions of varied character, combined with a general morbid state of the whole system. Medicine, in every case of diseased action, should be the servant, and not the master of the individual : if, therefore, you have perpetual recourse to its energy, you become subservient to it, because you cannot exist without it, or at least want the perseverance to do so ; a clear indication of the inutility of any particular habit.

Respecting the medical treatment of nervous diseases, I first think it proper to premise, that great mildness and caution is particularly requisite, in order to acquire the confidence of the patient ; a circumstance too slightly appreciated in general. In fact, without influence on the mind, remedies will be unavailable ; for if once a patient entertains an idea no interest is excited in his case, he feels

under anxiety and embarrassment in your presence, and distrusts your professions of relief. Thus insurmountable prejudices are created, and to which, after reflection, he pertinaciously adheres.

The principal circumstances requiring our attention will be the state of the bowels, which at proper intervals, if not spontaneously affected, must be gently opened: the tone of the fibres of the stomach must, if possible, be restored to their pristine vigour, so that digestion may perform its functions with more appropriate regularity and effect, otherwise insuperable difficulties will arise that our after treatment cannot combat with. Spasms, when present, require our utmost caution, and, if not immediately subdued, produce very serious evils, and that with a rapidity that alarms even less tenacious minds than those possessed by the nervous. Prompt temporary relief at this particular crisis may save the patient, and however the use of opium is deprecated in general in nervous affection, here suspend its application, and you lose your patient.

But no permanent advantage will ever be acquired by medical treatment, so long as the predisposing causes are not removed; to the reduction of their vitalizing action, every application of our remedies must be directed, to allow the predisposing causes to take their course without controul, is equivalent to the surrender of life; for if they do not actually produce death, they at least produce that kind of revulsion in the animal and mental system, to which death would be happiness. The

time of a medical practitioner is never better occupied than in the investigation of the remote causes of a diseased action, and the equivocal and anomalous symptoms that accompany diseases of nervous debility cannot be too closely investigated, and without which I am sure no adequate remedy can be applied. Specifics in popular and private practice may be resorted to, and revered as the palladium of concentered science: but, for my part, I know of none. The only rational practice, however tedious in its application and progress, is to adapt your means of cure to the existing indications of the diseased action; and however anomalous that may be, if you attempt to organize your ideas upon a system, you cannot fall into gross and fundamental error, let the result be ever so opposite to your endeavours. Having formed with cool, deliberate reflection, your idea of the character of the disease, let the method of your application of remedies vary agreeable to the constitution you have to contend with, the season of the year, and the period of time that has elapsed since its commencement; these and their minor links all form objects of enquiry. Under the progress of giving medicine, strictly enjoin attention to diet and exercise, and a positive abstinence from all those causes, *natural or acquired*, that may have assisted in the production of the derangement: nor is it less requisite to attend to the patient's temperament, habit, age, sex, and strength, cause and degree of violence of the disease, so that our idea of the nature of the disease may guide us



to the selection of remedies, that at least promise to improve the general constitution, and render it less subservient to the diseased action ; and in all nervous diseases you must attempt nothing by sudden or violent means, nor are remedies too frequently to be changed, unless some new indications of cure occur from a vivid alteration in the state of the disease ; and it is to be recollected that the same apparent train of symptoms in different persons will not yield to the same class of remedies.

## HYPOCHONDRIAC DISEASES.

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THE subject before us is one that embraces a moral and medical treatment ; a moral treatment, as far as regards the influence of our moral and civil functions ; and medical, as connected with a diseased state of the body. It is necessary before we enter further on the subject, to premise that this disease, like all nervous affections, takes its rise from a deranged action of the nervous system ; hence the condition, structure, and capacity of the brain forms a prominent feature in all investigations of this character, and to which I have before alluded, by its being the organ that keeps the rest in action ; therefore a limited derangement of its functions soon disturbs the rest, and that for a most obvious reason, because at its apex all the nerves, those galvanic conductors of animal action, unite. One would be led to infer that these facts would in some measure elucidate the nature and character of that great desideratum, the sentient faculty : that question, however, eludes our most subtle enquiry, and leaves no knowledge of itself beyond its uncircumscribed operations, and perhaps the arrogance of man stands in the wide range of creation without a competitor, when the bold

flights of his abstruse research would demonstrate its character, action, connection, and vitality.

It has been the fatality of hypochondriac affections to be treated with levity by the generality of practitioners ; in fact, so sceptical are some as to deny its existence ; therefore, how an individual will cure a disease, the existence of which he doubts, appears to require some consideration. Entertaining no idea of its entity, he of course does not investigate its symptoms, and the patient is left a victim to

“That pang, where more than madness lies,  
“The worm that will not sleep, and never dies;”

bringing in its first stage an imbecility of intellect far advancing on the confines of a species of insanity, that lays the foundation for a total subversion of that energy of mind, so requisite for the direction of our civil pursuits. Hence, if this work aspires only to impress the necessity of further investigation on a subject of high national importance, its object will not be without a corresponding utility ; for hitherto, I maintain, the subject has been treated with censurable levity. I further contend, and experience supports my assertion, that these diseases daily increase, and the annalist of more auspicious times will leave this assertion on public record.

The term hypochondriac is here meant to convey an idea of that species of disease that arises from what, under a general term, is called low spirits, which is induced by languor, listlessness, want of



occupation, and its consequent injurious results, as unsteadiness of resolution, timidity respecting the operations of a distant and indefinite period, with a dread and anxiety of the events that period may develop, accompanied with a gloomy and irritable despondency, and all the errors of mental hallucinations or illusions, and this without any vivid cause: wild and visionary doctrines govern all their acts, love of eccentricity, their imaginable grievances and sufferings are a boundless field of conversation. Conjoined to these symptoms is an assiduous, laborious attention to every change of feeling; to this preternatural excess of sensibility is usually added the symptoms of indigestion, hysterical affections, and their concomitants, as restless nights, wandering imagination, nightmare, &c. All species of this disease are very difficult of cure, and when they have subsided, frequently again retrograde. The approach of this malady is usually announced by the above symptoms, more or less variegated, and patients labouring under this disease bear the inclemencies of the weather with astonishing torpidity; the bowels are excessively constipated, and in fact the increased sensibility of the nerves produces many similar effects to that already enumerated in nervous affections. But in the hypochondriac, mental illusion is the primary affection, unconnected with any morbid action of the body; and it is in its primary or lucid stage that much at least should be attempted, for if it is left to its own energy, it is very seldom removed, and particularly with the female.

In every disease that arises from a derangement of the sentient faculty, a change of scene, though in that recommendation we are often disappointed, appears to afford the best chance of recovery ; for a succession of new objects bring to their right criteria the wandering ideas, and fixes them in regular succession ; and this change should be assisted by a removal of all those causes, as far as circumstances will admit, which formerly called into action his passions ; and these amusements must be from time to time varied and intermixed with friendly and interesting conversation. If errors of early indiscretion have led to this derangement, the ground-work of cure must be commenced by a total abandonment of those habits, sentiments, and inclinations, which incapacitate individuals from the sublimer duties of their station ; and this should be attempted, if possible, in the infant period of vice, before debility establishes its wretched empire : indeed, so dangerous is the character and the influence of this vice, that being once admitted into the mind, it bends to its baneful purpose even the principles of virtue, exhausts nature of all her beauty and vigour, abridges the period of life, and produces a depression of animal spirit, and a mental imbecility, over which neither medicine nor reflection have any controul. Nature never moves with impetuosity or precipitation ; she requires energy, it is true, but it is that energy over which temperance places her land-mark ; she moves by rule and measure ; if she is spurred beyond her strength, she falls into premature de-



crepitude, and a wayward fate surrounds her, with the habiliments of frosty age, when she should revel in the plenitude, vigour, and serenity of an eastern spring. A mind oppressed with the hostile conviction of its own intemperance, requires to be leniently dealt with ; and however the error is to be deprecated by the more discreet sons of stronger nerves, and more healthy reflection, yet they have claims to our sympathy, and the first and proudest office of our nature is to draw the veil of oblivion over the remembrance of error and its wretchedness, always bearing in mind, that the bad example of one individual will often lead another to deeds and opinions from which his nature shudders, but his fortitude is not equal to the effort of resistance.

For these discordant habits are only contracted after frequent fatal repetitions ; in fact, no other punishment is required but the recollection of the error, and that they constantly see, with all the force of its enormity ; hence, hard indeed would be the lot of the individual, if, for the errors of youthful indiscretion, you were to place him totally out of the range of human sympathies : forbid it every sentiment that adorns intellectual man, every feeling that dignifies his finite character, and by every tear that glistens in the bright orb of beauty's eye. It does not follow, because, in an hour of nervous trepidation we have passed the barrier of moral rectitude, the door of reformation is for ever closed ; vain indeed then would be the cheering precepts of philosophy and humanity, if that was the cool and rigid result : we are by nature formed

of more plastic materials, and it is for mutual interest that man should assist man ; thus united, we are one indivisible family, and are expressly congregated in one common asylum to aid each other by reciprocal acts of benevolence and kindness. In fact, it is this principle that forms man to individual virtues, and consoles him when surrounded by error and misfortune ; for it intuitively persuades to virtue, by contrasting its semblance to vice, and thus excites the individual by every just feeling to retrace with determined resolution the paths he forsook when rectitude was on the wane. Be it too ever remembered, that in solid and actual repentance there is an indescribable something, more pleasing and fascinating than even innocence itself, and a noble aspiring rectitude in its continuance that proudly gives, by the steady simplicity of its manner, an example that not only identifies itself with the best feelings of the heart, but sheds a moral lustre on all around.

In these affections there appears to be a too great mobility of the nervous system, inattention to which may bring on a variety of diseases of a more fatal tendency, such as spasmodic, convulsive, and epileptic affections, and other similar diseases, and which predispose to organic derangement, obscure perhaps in its origin, and latent in its effect, yet certainly will, by a long continued action, induce affections of the thoracic and abdominal viscera, by the effect of connection and sympathy ; and when once the pulmonary system is diseased, the effect of remedies assumes a very doubtful charac-

ter, and a placebo practice is instituted that may amuse, but relieves not the patient.

Respecting the mode of treatment, nothing can be laid down with precision :—in fact, it must be subservient to its different stages, and the symptoms that accompany those stages.

If the deranged state of the system arises from the suppression of some of the evacuations, our first object is to obtain regularity in them by every possible means ; if from increased sensibility of the nerves, change of place and manner of life cannot be dispensed with, and a removal of all those things by which that irritation is likely to be renewed or supported ; if a state of inactivity has contributed to produce it, endeavour to throw them into active pursuits, and thus engaging the mind, you correct, or at least meliorate the disease ; for you should recollect that it is in the first stages our hopes of cure depend, otherwise the hypochondriacal symptoms may pass into epilepsy, and that into fatuity, convulsions, and apoplexy. Attention to the bowels, and to the state of the stomach, will always be requisite ; for gentle purges, repeated at certain intervals, will in the early stages remove a morbid condition of the hypochondrical viscera, when all our after efforts will be nugatory, if this has been neglected.

Attention to diet and regularity of exercise have each their corresponding utility ; as well as both the cold and tepid bath.



## HYSTERICAL DISEASES.

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THE diseases under this denomination more particularly appertain to that sex who have ever justly been considered the models of perfection in whatever relates to delicacy, sentiment, and morality; and this state of disease appears to be more attributable to their abstraction from active pursuits, than any organic delicacy of structure. In fact, that variety of action that forms with man an agreeable exercise of novelty, and develops the power of his genius, in woman is necessarily restricted to a less effective range, but whose flexibility of intellect, and greatness of mind, is not less competent to that range, did their station in society require the same activity. It is this difference in education and habit that is the origin of those symptoms usually classed under this head. Every branch of nervous affections assume a character, as if by prescriptive right, to the chronic type; for even when they do subside, they frequently return. The accession of hysteric symptoms is generally announced by some evident change in the character of the individual, as an unusual degree of sadness, of fear, and temerity; the mind, doubting its own resources, becomes the slave of every imaginary

phantom that moves around it ; gloom of idleness produces a disrelish to society, and hence the disposition becomes irritable and uneasy. Disgusted with the mode of life to which circumstances bind them, they become unsteady in their avocations, and every other person to them, appears to enjoy that happiness they only are in search of ; though sedulous about trifles, they bear real evil with a stoicism that cannot be surpassed in the Spartan annals, and this variation from the general conduct produces corresponding symptoms of derangement in the health of the individual, and all of which partake of the nervous character. Look to the internal feelings, mark the horror that pervades the mind, see physical and mental causes each co-operating to the destruction of the individual happiness : peruse with the steady and luminous eye of Lavater the individual's countenance, and there too you will see deeply engraved on the features the internal anguish that floats around the mind. Are such unequivocal signs of disease to be treated like " a mouse in an air pump ?" and this at a period when physic assumes the character of regular science.

In the polished circles of society, where folly, not intellect, reigns, this state of ephemeral disease is developed by want of economy in the management of the passions, by indolence, exhausted pleasure, unsatisfying amusements, wounded vanity, and that light, interesting study of novelty, that leaves the mind dependant on exterior resources to support its declining action. These il-

lusive and monotonous causes, combined with an original predisposition to nervous irritation, contribute to weaken the energies of the mind, and thus led from one stage to another, it gradually induces that state of disease, and its concomitants, defined hysterical; and by an irregular assemblage of sluggish events, loose, disjointed, and discordant in their action, one disease follows the other, ennui first, melancholy next, insanity thirdly, and lastly moral suicide, the most dreadful of them all.

The remote causes of this malady are as various as the individuals it affects:—among the principal are excessive evacuations of any character, suppression of the menses, whites—or the neglect of usual evacuations, anxiety or mental agitation, improper diet, former diseases, which have weakened the system, and injured the tone of the stomach.

The symptoms usually exhibited in this disease bear great affinity to those already described under the head of nervous diseases. The principal peculiarities of this disease first are discovered in the patient's countenance, which is devoid of its usual animation, the aspect dejected, the eyes in continual motion, accompanied with difficult respiration, frequently amounting to apparent suffocation, palpitations of the heart, pains in the loins, coldness in the extremities, torpidity of action, diminished perspiration, flatulency, distension of stomach, the urine limpid and watery, the bowels open at one period and costive another, the mind trifling, whimsical, and irritable; and when the hysterical suffocation is present, it is often attended



with involuntary laughing and crying, heart-burn, and the convulsive fits frightfully succeed each other, especially of the abdominal muscles ; and though this disease is one which is rarely attended with danger, yet, when long continued, it harasses beyond measure the patient, and so debilitates the constitution, as to predispose it to chronic, morbid action. Thus, after eating, nausea comes on, then a bitter taste in the mouth, partial vomiting of acid or bilious matter, pains in the stomach or intestines, flatulency, eructations, and all the other symptoms of indigestion, receding and recurring at varied periods of the disease.

In the first stages of this malady, and before it acquires a bold character, I am lead to suppose, it is in the power of the individual to obviate or solicit the accession of the fits, though the symptoms, after such an accession, certainly become involuntary ; and these convulsions are frequently prolonged by the individuals present attempting to force liquids into the mouth, rubbing the palms of the hands, sprinkling the face with cold water, and the adoption of a variety of interesting suggestions, that display much feeling with but little judgment. These intrusive symptoms require plenty of air and quietude, and on their cessation, the attention must be directed to the general condition of the system, so as to prevent a recurrence. If a plethoric state is present, and the excitability of the cerebral organ much increased, local bleeding, though generally deemed a secondary mode of action, will here be of essential service ; for all hysterical indi-

viduals better bear the loss of blood by this mode than any other, and it should be followed up by gentle purges, combined with antispasmodic anodynes, a strict attention to the antiphlogistic regimen.

If, on the contrary, it proceeds from too low a state of the system, and where much morbid irritation is indicated, we must then strengthen the nervous system by bitter and tonic medicine, good air, and gentle regular exercise, by nourishing not stimulating diet, and by restoring, when absent, suppressed evacuations, and particularly to remove all uterine irritation, if present.

The management of the mind commands peculiar care, and is one in which ability must conjoin its efforts with humanity, for all nervous individuals acutely feel; and if we fail in the cultivation of their confidence, we generally have to deplore a want of success in the means and remedies we suggest for their recovery. The primary point of treatment in the practice of this disease must be directed to interrupt the attention of the patient to accustomed objects, by the introducing of that pleasing species of novelty that will excite and interest the intellect to some new effort; for life, says Johnson, to be worthy of a rational being, must always be in progression. In fact, this disease is maintained in action for want of energy, or that which should rouse into action; for woman, a combination of every element that can adorn or disgrace the human character, though necessarily restricted by her station in society from the more active and energetic pursuits of man, yet never-

theless does not renounce the character of an active being, and cannot be happy in her domestic retreat if unemployed.

Voltaire has said, that occupation delivers us from three great evils, ennui, want, and vice ; the vices of idleness, says Seneca, are to be drowned by business ; and it is in the actual pursuit of that employment, and not in its possession, in which the talisman of happiness resides, and how often is not the anticipation more pleasing than the result ? If we have no object in pursuit, if we have nothing to hope for, we then feel the full weight of every evil ; nay we do more, for we go in search of it, and thus, to avoid Scylla, we dash upon Charybdis. Therefore the mind should never be suffered to remain long inactive ; for if you give too much leisure to its faculties, it soon falls into decrepitude, and every thing around it becomes an object of trouble and inquietude, and the novelty which lassitude gives, soon becomes tedious and insupportable. Time flies light as the gossamer when the circle of the day is filled by occupation ; then hour meets hour but to receive new vigour and animation : but when a desert only opens to the view, and vacant hour succeeds the vacant hour, the spirit lags, a deadly gloom sits on the fair brow of nature and its God, existence is perpetuated in misery, its animated and interesting attributes no longer charm ; it is nominal life ; the inward spirit also breathes, loaded with misery's oppressed respiration, each vibration beats, to animal not intellectual action ; and thus, perhaps,



the fairest floweret of creation is seen but to waste its fragrance on the desert air. This discordant state of animal and mental action soon gives rise to every impetuous passion, to passions that play around the heart, till they destroy every germ of sensibility ; that sensibility, that should be the boast, the pride, and protector of the female character in its voyage through life ; I mean not that meretricious sensibility that wears the semblance of virtue without its principle, and to carry its assumptive aspect sacrifices every internal feeling at its shrine. No ; I mean that solid, fascinating, and unaffected sensibility, that holds vice and its disreputable and unprincipled minions in check by the purity, integrity, and honour of its manner. Let once passion really predominate, and it will soon trample on every moral obligation, and render the individual the painful victim of every hideous, wretched, and infatuated desire that can agitate and distress the human feeling : once forgotten, the dignity of character is not so easily retrieved, the governing power of the mind falls into inanity, sensibility loses its power, subterfuge succeeds it, and the silent upbraidings of conscience, sleeping in the confidence of a guilty mind, leaves the passions masters of themselves ; and thus, untutored by reason, without order and arrangement, delusive pleasure usurps the place of solid virtue, and gives rise to those artificial sentiments that corrupt and destroy the original and genuine feelings of the heart, substituting in their place the illusions of fancy, and the perversion of those faculties de-

signed by the wise institutes of nature for sublimer efforts. And these adventitious pleasures, gaining supreme authority over the mind, sheds over it the wormwood of misanthropy, which becomes the archetype of its future action, and unfortunately places the individual at the antipodes of connubial bliss, and with all those amiable and endearing connections that alleviate the sorrows of human life. It is the diurnal pivot on which this misery moves ; it is the cause and origin of all their after disasters ; and the regrets with which it also inspires them, are multiplied by the hideous image of reflection ; time, the lenient forgiving time, which diminishes other grief, by bidding “ memory beam on days that are past,” or soothes it by anticipation of the future, here gives hapless vigour and strength to every painful emotion, and renders each pang more permanent and distorted ; cloistered in the midst of society, morbid indifference sheds its baneful influence on their intellectual and physical energies ; they feel that in the meridian altitude of youth, grace and sensibility, the delirium of passion, so moveable in its caprice, and so incalculable in its effect, has their “ blossoms blasted in the bud,” and closed upon them, all the rational and interesting results that concentrate together, in the lovely purity of a conjugal and maternal character, the splendid elevation and pre-eminence of which guarantees for itself a moral, intellectual, and luxuriant reward in the circuit of its rational and domestic duties. In fact, in the excesses of this infatuated enthusiasm, in this desolating calamity

they see the destroyer of all their brilliant natural rights full of life, vigour, and intelligence ; they groan beneath its malediction, possessing, without power to use their energy, they become the victim of a combination of circumstances, that for ever embitter their existence. Let them contemplate, before it is too late, this scene, and while yet in their power, cultivate those amiable, endearing, and self-approving accomplishments, which insure domestic happiness, and every thing honourable in society, and then they will fill with silent but unceasing felicity those quiet scenes of private life, that add dignity and lustre to the female character.

This state of things does not long exist without communicating its effect on the health of the individual : the tone of the stomach becomes debilitated, indigestion and all its symptoms follow, with a great variety of chronic affections, that are only to be removed by a steady adherence to diet, exercise, and clothing ; by obviating costiveness, strengthening the vascular system, and removing the original cause of the disease.



## REFLECTIONS ON SUICIDE.

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“ Why shrinks the soul  
Back on herself, and startles at destruction ;  
'Tis the divinity that stirs within us ;  
'Tis Heav'n itself that points out an hereafter,  
And intimates eternity to man.”

HELVETIUS justly observes, man is the pupil of every object that surrounds him, of all the positions in which chance may place him, and, in short, of every incident that happens to him ; in fact, he is the slave of contingencies : hence the force of human passions and human wants, with their various springs and remote operations. Never did an author more clearly define human life than Helvetius here has done, and never were sentiments more exemplified than on the subjects that now form our investigation, exhibiting on every step we take the effect of some unforeseen contingency, which, producing immediately or remotely a diseased state of the mental faculties, are followed by results humanity deplures, but cannot obviate. And thus do I maintain Suicide, abstractedly considered, is to be regarded as the result of a diseased intellect, positive or partial in its action. No one in the full vigour of mental deliberate re-

flection, performs an act so singularly repugnant to the general laws of animal creation : the very character of our nature, a character full of doubt and anxiety, guarantees the correctness of the assertion. The apparent cautious consistence of the act, so much dwelt upon (by coroners and jury, and which has too frequently operated on their verdicts, to the general disadvantage of society), to prove the sanity of the individual in these cases, powerfully leads me, both from feeling and reflection, to infer, that it arises from the feverish energy of a diseased mental action over a mind debilitated by a conjunction of influences, moral and physical, beyond the reach of our development ; for such is the delicate peculiarity of sensation, that, that cause, which would in one mind produce passion and all its discordant train, in another would not elicit a single scintillation of feeling, so that the gad-fly of the one has no effect on the other ; and in this we have no new or extraneous principle to define, because we are well aware that in a disease, exclusively confined to mind, and solely modified by its action, much will depend on the firmness of the individual, and the exertion he makes in the early stage to free himself from its effect. But all are not possessed of the same stoic firmness, and hence again arises the division of its intensity ; yet rarely does this morbid action produce a positive or total suspension of the mental functions. It is on some peculiar point, to which this debility is referable ; for instance, religion, despair, remorse, and their infinite modifications, combined with causes that

perhaps I cannot better designate than under the term occult ; and so capricious is this mental alienation in its course, that on every point, and in every other transaction, the agency of the mind is in its full validity, and actually competent to cool deliberation and reflection ; so competent, that common observation would induce you to say, that the individual possessed his faculties in their full maturity : but casually glance at the child of his delusion, then rages the malady in all the brilliancy of its ire, it bursts the trammels of its caution, and depicts a scene that at once shows the nature of his disease, and the puerile effort of human intellect in its approach to perfectibility in its finite character.

No part of our sensitive frame is more subject to the caprice of vicissitude than the mind, and as Johnson says of the uncertainties of our present state, the most dreadful and alarming is the uncertain continuance of reason ; for what the sun is to the physical world, reason is to man's moral world. Deprived of the genial rays of reason, man falls in the scale of gradation below all other animals, and life assumes a mere secondary station ; its objects and its end become the baseless fabric of a vision ; the grand fulcrum of his hope is broken, the usual pursuits of his life no longer interest him ; he every where feels a vacuum, the harrowed mind takes a new range, becomes warped in some peculiar prejudice, and this feeling predominating through all his actions, the reflective principle is either suspended, or becomes subservient to a non-



descriptive but agonizing species of enthusiasm, which, seizing on its captive in an hour of nervous trepidation, when the ruling feeling, and temper is adverse to life and its contingences ; though action, desire, and hope, the last frail friend of man, lie dishevelled of their influence ; all, all is chaos before him, and thus ushered in by a thousand discordant sensations, the preconceived mania of the moment comes—maddening visions float before the victim's eye—the vertigo of delusion works the agitated maniac on—the precise and interesting moment is arrived—the hand grasps the instrument of death—dreadful contortions now disturb his frame—the last movements of despair are over, and the deep, and heretofore impervious mysteries of death, are open to his view.

What is the precise state of feeling, the efficient force of that feeling, and what degree of stoic firmness is requisite to arm the soul against the natural sympathies of its nature ? or what is the remote or primary cause of this unnatural conflict, this predilection for eternity, appears inaccessible to all our enquiry : and that for very obvious reasons ; for none but the agitated victim can describe his precise state of feeling at that important moment, or the chain of events that guided to its fatal consummation ; the exciting cause that led to this singular, melancholy, and dreadful act, we are, from concomitant facts, induced to infer arises from a varied concatenation or combination of circumstances, that by a gradual but a certain action produces a morbid sensibility of the cerebral organ,

the most delicate yet most complicated organ of our susceptible frame, and more under the influence of external action than any other part. What are the actual physical causes that contribute to this mental alienation we know not ; we are merely aware, that the brain is a very irritable organ, easily excited into action, and when once that action is produced, not as easily subdued. In fact, the actual principle of mind, neither the researches of Locke, Newton, or their contemporaries, have placed in a tangible form—as *a priori*, its operations have ceased ; for amid all the brilliant, beautiful, and scientific theories of ancient and modern investigators, one alone solitary stands the test of this enquiry, namely, that this mind, the apparent prototype of a first, great, beneficent, and perfect Cause, immediately, remotely, and ultimately depends on a certain, invisible, undefined principle, essentially and virtually distinct from the mere agency of materiality, thus reducing the splendid phenomena that accompanies the development of mental vitality, to the limited enquiry of the principle, by which the action of that singular phenomenon is regulated.

The peculiar character that sensation, thought, and volition assume in their progress to maturity, would induce us to infer, that in the mysterious combination of their unity, the sentient faculty displayed itself, the nervous system, as far as demonstration can go, is evidently the seat of that unity, and this well marked line of demarcation we cannot pass : for of the vitality, action, exten-

sion and appropriation, materiality or immateriality of the primary principle of all our ideas and action we know nothing. We have no other guide to our knowledge with the sentient faculty but by the medium of its operation, and in the matured and happy distribution of its energy, the genius of science, the grandeur of our moral, and the brilliancy of our intellectual character consists. Newton, who decided of nothing but by analysis, and that founded on geometry and experiment, left the unity of the soul and body, as well as the formation of idealism, where he found them. Locke, immortal in the annals of literature for having formed a code of religious toleration, says, that He to whom all is possible, could not He cause a material being to think as an atom, or an element of matter. Descartes again says, I think that I exist, therefore I do ; and on the axiom of Archimedes, that nothing is made without a cause, Leibnitz reared his system of pre-established harmony, in which he maintains the soul has no connection with the body ; but by what analysis or synthesis we are to become acquainted with the soul, and its operations, is still left in the embryo of fate ; its alpha and its omega eludes our research. I believe the actual condition of the brain to be very little concerned in mental derangement, the sentient faculty alone is diseased. It has been said, that in all maniacal cases, organic lesions of the brain are to be suspected ; and Morgagni states, that the medullary portion of the brain in such patients was unusually dry, hard, and firm ; and from frequent



dissection he was induced to infer, that generally was the case. For my part, I believe these appearances are fallacious, and are to be considered neither the effect nor cause of insanity ; for I maintain there is no question that a certain disease of intellect does exist, independent of general or partial constitutional infirmity. Thus I fear the physical causes of mental alienation will continue to disappoint our best enquiries ; for in diseases of this obscure character, what shall we acquire by entering into metaphysical disquisition, which requires the elucidation of one definition by the introduction of another. In fact, in diseases marked by such equivocal symptoms, and out of which arise such singular incidents, the variety of classification can be of no real utility, or practical advantage, because the mode of governing that practice can alone be guided by the existing symptoms of the diseased action, and the influence that action exerts on the general system. In short, every case, by an indescribable fatality, works its own destiny, and its individual pathology directs our practice. Indeed medicine can recognise no disease, in which inferences are drawn more hostile to each other than in this class ; and as I have said before, it is a fact no less instructive than paradoxical, that men, whose abilities and opportunities are co-equal, often give on the same individual case, and that within the twenty-four hours, opinions diametrically opposite to each other.

Among that class of individuals, whose fatality have marked them the victims of suicide, we find

the number nearly equal, as far as regards what may be termed mind ; for suicide, cruel and vindictive in all its affinities, neither regards talents or ignorance, age, time or circumstance, implanting with equal force on all its powerful action. It has been said, that in strong energetic feelings we may trace the first elements of that wild, sombre sensibility, that ungovernable principle of enthusiastic ardour, that vivid spirit of anticipation, that produces in the individual the primary rudiments of that arid philosophy, that leaves the individual a misanthrope to order and sociability ; and which renders him, by a languid but positive action, so stoically indifferent to exterior objects, as to divest even death of terror ; a crisis, that great and reflecting minds cannot regard with sentiments of indifference.

The primary, general, or probable cause of this mental alienation, this cataract over reason, philosophy has left us to adverse and uncertain definition, each author drawing upon this interesting point his own theory, without reference to any certain or tangible principle. I have before said, I am disposed to infer that the actual condition of the brain and its membranes has no influence in mental derangement, the sentient faculty is alone concerned. In giving this decision, it is necessary for me to state that in this history I confined myself to that variety of mental alienation that arises from no bodily infirmity, or organic malformation of the brain and its dependancies ; and in fact its pathology is at present too vaguely understood to

admit of discussion in a treatise of this character, which would merely extend its limits without any practical advantage.

In tracing the character of the individuals, who have been immolated at the shrine of suicide, it will be found they possessed many remarkable traits of individuality, combined with peculiarity of sentiment, strength of genius, vigour of application, brilliant originality, and every requisite necessary for a character of heroic greatness. In fact, it is from the splendid, luxuriant materials of this amalgamation, when fostered by a refined education, that induces me to believe that in them reside the first elements of that contrariety of character, with which human nature so luxuriantly abounds; and if fortunately bent, produce the moralist, the statesman, the poet, and the warrior. On the other hand, if the turbulent tide of life flows loud with feculent matter, it gives a sombre cast to all the incidents of life, renders every accidental result an object of serious disquietude, and destroys the confidence of future hope with a predilection of its futility. What is ardently desired at one moment excites disgust at the next, opposing with the proudest disdain whatever boon is granted; and thus the imagination is in perpetual pursuit of new objects, without fixing it upon any, reverting to the periods of the past, or anticipating the views of the future, life is absorbed in an impatience, better felt than described. From this contrariety of character, and its opposite results, I would virtually infer, that in the order of the universe, suicide is preconceived,



but not pre-ordained ; and this doctrine I maintain without any infraction of moral or natural law, arming and sheltering that doctrine under the jurisdiction of that principle of moral agency which liberally and correctly recognizes man, the slave of contingencies, the child of accident. Even Milton admits of something like fatality in his *Paradise Lost* :—

Whose fault !

Whose but his own ! Ingrate, he had of me  
All he could have ; I made him just and right,  
Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.

BOOK III.

Again, in *Book viii.*

Beware,

I, in thy persevering, shall rejoice,  
And all the blest : stand fast ; to stand or fall  
Free in thine own arbitrement it lies,  
Perfect within, no outward aid requires ;  
And all temptation to transgress repel.

Secure from outward force ; within himself  
The danger lies, yet lies within his power :  
But God left free the will, for what obeys  
Reason is free, and reason he had right,  
But bid her well beware, and still erect,  
Lest, by some fair appearing good surpris'd.  
She dictates false, and misinform the will.

BOOK IX.

I here mean that fatality that is purely physical, and yet predestined fatality is spoken of as if it was a mere non-entity, a flash without a bolt ; but those who regard with attention the varied events

that chequer human actions, and have the liberality to confess they cannot penetrate through the clouds of time, foreknow the hour when death on his pale horse shall come, or foresee hereafter; must acknowledge that at some period they have felt its energy, and admitted, while yet its glowing influence was upon them, its governing and invincible action. Take, for instance, the Jews, a people celebrated in all ages and all countries, a people whose intercourse is extended over every civilized state, in fact celebrated for singularity of character, habit and sentiment, they at once form a striking and extended example of the effect of that secret influence we term fatalism. Deeply impressed with the idea that it is decreed, that the productions of the soil and labour of one generation, shall be destroyed by the succeeding one, their feelings become subservient to it; and hence, in all their family concerns, these predestined, exiled, expatriated people are extremely solicitous, as far as human foresight can go, to weaken and oppose the realization of this fixed and dreaded fatality by every means in their power; but which, in derision of every effort, continues its turbulent course. Here we see the mind not acting as a mere cerebral secretion, but as a sentient, reflecting principle, governing by immutable laws the action of the individual. In fact, every man is born with a certain constitution of body and mind, says Priestley, independent of his own choice. The circumstances in which he is born, with respect to country, parents, education, and advantages or disadvantages of all kinds, are

likewise altogether independent of himself. It is no matter when you say that his first volition takes place, for you must admit it is an uncertain, definite circumstance independent of himself. His determinations, therefore, being by the hypothesis certain or definite in these circumstances, whatever it be, it brings him into other but definite circumstances, whether foreseen or unforeseen by himself depends upon his judgment or sagacity. In these new circumstances he makes another definite choice or determination, concerning the new objects that are now before him; and this new determination brings him into other new circumstances: and thus his whole life passes in a constant succession of circumstances and determinations, all inseparably connected till you come to the last determination of all, immediately preceding the extinction of all his power by death. Plato says, the Being who presides over the whole, has disposed and complicated all things for the happiness and virtue of the whole, every part of which, according to the extent of its influence, does, and suffers what is fit and proper. One of these parts is yours, O unhappy man, which, though in itself most inconsiderable and minute, yet being connected with the universe, ever seeks to co-operate with that supreme order. You, in the mean time, are ignorant of the very end for which all particular natures are brought into existence, that the all-comprehending nature of the whole may be perfect and happy; existing as it does, not for your sake, but the cause and reason of your existence, which, as



in the symmetry of every artificial work, must of necessity concur with the general design of the artist, and be subservient to the whole of which it is a part. Your complaint is therefore ignorant and groundless against the wisdom of Divine Providence, since, according to the various energy of creation, and the common laws of nature, there is a constant provision of that which is best at the same time for you and for the whole. For the governing intelligence, clearly beholding all the actions of animated and self-moving creatures, and that mixture of good and evil diversifies them, considered first of all by what disposition of things, and by what situation of each individual in the general system, vice might be depressed and subdued, and virtue made secure of victory and happiness, with the greatest facility and in the highest degree possible. In this manner he ordered, through the entire circle of being, the internal constitution of every mind, where should be its station in the universal fabric, and through what variety of circumstances it should proceed in the whole tenor of its existence. He also maintains a state of retribution, as well for those who, by the exercise of good dispositions, being harmonized and assimilated unto the divine virtue, are consequently removed to a place of unblemished sanctity and happiness; as of those who, by their flagitious arts, have risen from contemptible beginnings to the greatest affluence and power, and whom you therefore look upon as unanswerable instances of negligence in the gods, because you are ignorant of

the purposes to which they are subservient, and in what manner they contribute to that supreme intention of good to the whole. And thus so far do I accord with Plato, for though I contend that the suicide is the predestined victim of his own restless temerity, yet I would wish it to be understood, that I do not conceive this principle of predestination at all to militate, in its general character or result, against our attention to moral conduct, or the idea of reward and punishment, and is as equally opposite to philosophical deism as atheism. The Deity, full of knowledge and preconception, governing by laws which are as immutable as mysterious, and mysterious only to our limited conception of sensation and intelligence, knows that a portion of mankind will be adverse to rectitude, while others will be as equally tenacious of it ; hence he has endowed man with a degree of knowledge, firmness, reason, and free will, or, as Mr. Pope says,—

“ And binding nature fast in fate,  
 “ Left free the human will”—

so we have the power of either improving or debasing our nature in such gradations as to render us capable of higher rank, perfection, and happiness, or to be debased to a station of greater imperfection and misery. It is in the change that is to take place, on the separation of the spirit from the body, in which consists the real answer to the greatest difficulty that sceptics can advance against the manifest wisdom, harmony, and arrangement that is every where displayed in the economy of

the world : yet, though clouded by partial doubt, who that calmly for a moment appeals to his own heart, can hesitate in supposing and maintaining that a being endowed with reason, idea and memory, susceptible of the various impressions imagination gives rise to, and capable of reflecting on its own acts and sentiments, shall lose in the hideous vortex of annihilation the fruits of its own labour and intelligence, such a supposition is incompatible with every principle of religion, and at variance with every civil and rational sentiment.

If suicide can be justly regarded as the act of a sentient, reflecting, and accountable being, still many important points are comprehended in the investigation. Paley, in his *Moral Philosophy*, says, it rests on this question—May every man who pleases to destroy himself innocently do so? Before this question can at all be solved, we must have full conviction that man is a free and perfect agent ; his nature must be unfettered even by fate, his will free, and his intellect clear and unclouded of all metaphysical delusion ; in short, he must possess the *mens solida* in all its transcendant brilliancy, so that his general conclusions may be supported both by fact and theory. To this enquiry must also be attached the character and object of life. The first question arising on these points naturally directs the attention to the consideration of the purpose for which life has been granted. Did the Deity, in his benevolent conception of life, grant it as a boon? If so, may it be returned when its operations cease as such? Is there any moral or



physical law which binds individuals to maintain a compact formed without consent? Is man really a free agent, or is it the mere *aurora borealis* of the imagination? Does necessity never govern his actions? and if necessity does govern them, the idea of free agency at least becomes extremely equivocal: and when the hand of the suicide separates the soul from its fragile mansion, does that deed, however lamentable to his family and society, at all invert the brilliant order of the universe? Will the deed, however lacerating to the feelings of benevolence and humanity, render the soul of the suicide less interesting and sublime at the fearful throne of its God? Does the annihilation of animal action, the premature modification of mere matter, alter a single law of nature? Does our compact with society cease with life? Adverse circumstances rendered its attractions of no avail, the genius of felicity forsook me, debilitated with grief, actual or conceived, the compact became hideous to me, and I renounced it by the only act left for that renunciation. I was averse to life and all its institutions, my heart was withered and broken; I felt myself in the midst of family, friends, and country, an isolated being:

My death and life,  
My bane and antidote were both before me.

Conscience, the connection of the fleeting period, with life and immortality, equally slept; nothing remained of life but its feculent illusions, the imagery of which only roused to reflections hostile to

extension, and thus spurred and goaded on by an inflexible fatality, I traversed—

“Beyond the visible, diurnal sphere,”

unbidden broke the talisman of existence, burst asunder the gates of light, and

“Into the Heaven of Heavens I have presum’d

“An earthly guest.”

Thus ceased my connection with society; and while yet my spirit hovers around ye, I stop to ask, why, ye men of wisdom, are ye so weak, so puerile in your congregated force, as even to let a spirit of vindictive passion pursue your victim beyond your limit? it can have no influence on the spirit fled, that revels in brighter realms, and where equal day illumines a milder sphere. Hence your vengeance only operates on inanimate matter; a principle as foreign to religion, morality, and sound reason, as it is abhorrent to the feelings of benevolence and humanity, and not less discordant to the best interests of mankind. Why war with the dead? Is the temple of Janus never to close on human frailty? Surely in the deep stained catalogue of crime, there are others of a more malignant character; yet in every other case, common popular feeling humanely draws the veil of compassion on the errors of the hapless victim, and why not here? as a punishment, your malediction loses its effect, because the actual consequences of your misapplied vengeance falls not on the victim, but on his innocent family; sure it is enough to slander his memory without la-

cerating the feelings of his survivors. Oh ! let the recording angel drop on his bier the tear of sympathy, and let the feeling heart of benevolence, condoling with the true spirit of sincerity and religious sensibility, use its best efforts to heal the bleeding hearts of those his hapless fatality has left behind. Recollect too, that the spirit that animated his lifeless frame is returned to that omnipotent gracious Being, who breathed upon it the breath of life, and bid it live. He stands, ye mighty lords in self-creation, before a more transcendant tribunal, a more liberal judge ; the measure of his sufferings in society is complete ; he can no longer recognise its power, or feel its effect ; he has ceased to form one of its family, and your malediction, unwise as it is futile, evaporates to your own discredit. St. Peter, in the same breath that he arraigned the Jews for having crucified our Saviour, says, “ Repent, and be forgiven.” What are posthumous consequences to him, who has had the bold temerity to desert life, and all its blandishments, to navigate the majestic ocean of futurity without rudder or pilot ? What were they to Cato, in his hour of intermitting reason ; he had studied the human character in all its gradations ; he had minutely investigated the philosophy of life, both in an active and passive state ; he found doubt to rest on every point, and thus wearied out with searching after cause and effect, he closed his splendid career by anticipation : and—

“ Is there no bright reversion in the sky

“ For those who greatly think, or bravely die ?”



Seneca justly and feelingly said, it was a spectacle on which the Deity might gaze with attention, a brave man combating adversity. "I do not see," says he, "what Jupiter has on earth more illustrious to behold than a Cato. Must not the Gods hail with pleasure the return of their favourite to them, who has escaped from earth by so memorable and laudable an exit!" Death consecrates those, whose end, even they who fear to imitate, must commend. And be it spoken to the eternal honour of the Roman people, that in an age when science was still rocked in its infant cradle, they

"Honour'd Cæsar less than Cato's sword;"

for no ephemeral flights of singularity surrounded the conduct of "godlike Cato."

"Her last good man dejected Rome ador'd,

"Tears gush'd from ev'ry eye."

When the curfew tolled, that enthusiastic genius, virtue and true patriotism, laid immolated on the dread altar of suicide for his country's salvation, his fellow men's freedom. The seal of perdition Cæsar had fixed on Rome; the banners of freedom lay prostrate on the ground, crimsoned with the blood of Rome's warlike sons; the moral energies of the people were surrounded by

"Triumphal cars,

"The spoils of nations, and the pomp of wars;"

the caitiffs of tyranny and oppression trampled on the free-born sons of Rome: she sighed with agony, she writhed with torture, amid this mighty conflict, these jarring elements of discord, where

liberty and oppression fought hand to hand, till numbers, not energy, gave victory to Cæsar :

“ The great, th’ important day, big with the fate  
“ Of Cato and of Rome,”

found the strong aspiring spirit of Roman Cato equal to its fame, and the genius of Cato eclipsed its former splendour—he served his country for itself, and nobly sacrificed himself for his country. “ When or where (says Cato) was this world made for Cæsar?—I can no longer breathe this contaminated air, the sun of freedom has withdrawn its light, and while yet its last ray lingers on the horizon, my proud spirit, the spirit of my glory, must grapple no longer with destiny. Cæsar has clasped with adamant strength the diadem of despotism, and around him has encircled its privileges with the best blood of Rome ; even the sighs of liberty no longer whisper their responses ; my heart bleeds Rome for thee, Cato loved and died for thee.

“ O ye Pow’rs that search  
“ The heart of man, and weigh his inmost thoughts,  
“ If I have done amiss, impute it not !  
“ The best may err, but you are good, and Oh!”—

Thus died the Roman in life’s maturity, in intellect’s vigour, leaving to posterity an imperishable example of the fragile texture of the human mind, when adorned with resources as boundless as the realms of science : but I say with Lucan :

“ Victurosque Dei celant, ut vivere durent  
Felix ipse mori.”

Ah ! Suicide ! let for a moment your ardent imagination reflect on that positive and indispensable duty you owe to society to preserve your life and health ; recollect that it is not by the degree of moral guilt, in which the dereliction of your duty places you, that you are to estimate its result, the danger of which you have not anticipated, but by the degree of mischief the act will produce in society ; for precept, however glowing in its energy, however persuasive in argument, and however final in its deductions, assumes but an ephemeral character before example. If the delicate, unassuming, but fervid power of conscience, by bringing the lucid mirror of past events to your view, embitters your present moments, live, serenity and happiness may yet be your associates. As contentment and sociality bedecked the gay and magical morn of your early youth, when the susceptibility of amiable passion bloomed in all its luxuriant foliage, live, to diffuse, like the cheering rays of yon imperial sun, that genial happiness to thy brothers. If in the day when thy better feeling was obscured by the turbulent ebullition of thy erring nature, you deviated from the strict spirit and letter of thy moral agency, live, to correct by wiser rectitude the folly of thy youth. Does the hand of misfortune grasp thee from the errors of others, if so, live, you were a silent agent, and reproach should not enter within your breast. If the griping, grinding calls of penury surrounds thee, let thine energy eclipse the dæmon of discontent, and live to hope that thy days of years may be pillowed on the couch of peace



and plenty. If fortune, in her unguided caprice, has given thee the will and power to revel, in health, competence, and peace, live to enjoy and diffuse around thee, with rational liberality, the harvest placed at thy disposal. If thou art an aggressed, live, the crime which thy aggressor committed against thee will bring with it its hour of retribution. If, on the contrary, in an unguarded moment of irritation, thou hast assumed the character of aggressor, live, so that the time may arrive, when, by a generous deed, thou mayst atone for thy indiscretion. If thy character has been wantonly depreciated, live, time will remove the taunting aspersion, and thy character will gracefully recede from its poison as the dew drops from the lion's mane. If the malevolent reproaches have foundation in distorted facts, live, to merit them no longer, for "to err is human." If your station in society is that which your arrogance presumes to be below your merit, live, that you may one day move in a sphere more congenial to your sentiments and taste. If that pre-eminence is already acquired, live, to persevere in the brilliant course your enterprising genius has acquired for you. If the contingencies of your predestined fate have placed you among the indolent, thoughtless millions, live, and by the habits of active benevolence improve the better feelings of your heart. If you have been fortunate enough to cultivate a taste and inclination for industry, live, that by the force of your example its good effect may be communicated to all around you. If you have enemies—and who breathes with-

out them? live to render abortive their malevolence. If, in the round of your acquaintance, you find that exotic plant, a friend, live to merit and improve his friendship. Hast thou a wife and family, live to protect them against the casualties of life, and with the glistening tear of joy beaming on thy eye shalt thou receive their innocent gladness, while climbing on thy knee, the "envied kiss to share." If in the plenitude of vigour, health, and prosperity, thy life has been occupied apart from religion and morality, live, to correct its morbid velocity, and bend its course to affinities more congenial to its after prospects. If that life has been spent in all the moral and religious duties of a christian, live, to communicate by the example of thyself its mild and beneficent views, so that thy brethren, seeing the folly and impiety of atheistical infidelity, perversion, and sophistry, may yet, e'er it is too late, estimate the sublimer tenets of christianity, and by the powerful phenomena of revealed religion, and the influence of redemption, attach the heart truly and virtually to its interesting doctrine; for we are all the children of hope, and infidelity to religion but ill accords with that hope.

Suicide, have ye reflection? if so, does that reflection induce you to comprehend the universe, and its order? Rest for a moment longer on the confines of either world, to behold the symmetry and uniformity of that order; then ask thyself, if there does not exist a Great First Cause, to whom thou art accountable? Hast thou, the boasted abstract of creation, thou image of that Great First Cause,



no inward monitor to curb the erring impetuosity of thy nature? Is the undefined power of that principle we call conscience, a vulgar prejudice, still retained, among many others of a less intelligent age? Is the soul's immortality a midnight dream, the mere illusion of a silent hour, when the spirit wanders in search of mental incidents? Is man, who possesses volition, thought, and action, and who also enjoys an intellectual, physical, and moral existence, the mere creature of habit and education? Has society no immediate, remote, or particular claims upon you? Was the universe, that luxuriant garden of nature, and its beautiful arrangements, completed merely for your individual pleasure and amusement? Do you live for self only? Has the name of father, wife, and family no affinity to you? Have the institutions of society no practical reference to man as a moral agent? Have you become so absorbed in the satellite of self, that its influence obscures the common feelings of nature, and places you out of the range of the family compact? because your ideas of your own utility and importance are in opposition with those drawn by a capricious world, who seldom give themselves the trouble to estimate character; sullen and displeased with the supposed neglect, is the wisdom of your nature, the energy of your character supported and maintained by your desertion of it? What do you expect to acquire by a premature exit, the mere annihilation of animal matter, and the cessation of its action? You perhaps forget that man has two distinct characters of ex-



istence, a moral and a physical one, and that the one cannot have life without the other; and that when one becomes deranged, the other follows as the natural result. The doctrines of materialism and atheism may endeavour to seduce you into a belief, that all beyond the tranquil grave is perfect chaos, a dark impervious void, one eternal vacuum, where the soul and its energies sleep in endless night. These doctrines are incompatible with your station as an accountable being, ah! misguided man, every sensation that fluctuates around our intellectual faculties, every emotion that vibrates on the heart, controverts this false and fatal philosophy.

Sebonde says, there is no part of the world that disclaims or derogates from its maker. We have indisputable proofs that mankind, in all ages and in all countries, entertained the idea of a perfect Supreme Being, and had a correct knowledge of his inherent power and providence; in fact, cultivation, with all its advantages, has never produced a more pure and refined idea of the first and mysterious source of being, than is to be found in the sublime and metaphysical allegories of the ancient writers; and imagination, that profound, vast, and magnificent theatre of human genius, has never delineated his being and operations in richer, deeper, more brilliant, or impressive language, than is to be found in the splendid volumes of those writers; in their elegant persuasive diction, you find the best lessons of moral excellence unenlightened reason could suggest. In short, all the categories and syllogisms, both of ancient and modern times, go to

the confirmation of this doctrine : intuition points to us a first or eternal cause, and this single idea, by progression, is the prelude to a lofty assemblage of reasoning, that proves every effect is dependent on cause, and this analysis combines within itself a synopsis that completes a character of a First Cause, whose stability is surrounded by intelligence and arrangement, and whose existence is demonstrated by every object that surrounds us. Again, trace the natural history of man, from the first dawn of reason and reflection to the latest period they operate, and you will find, however doubt and uncertainty pervades many controvertal points, there never did exist the individual who actually denied the existence of a Deity, and his belief in a future state, when closely pressed upon the subject. So various and involved in mystic sublimity is the character of being, or the *primum mobile* of life, that its nature and attributes are equally incomprehensible ; we know that this versatile power acts with reciprocal proportion on all parts of an animate body as a *principium commune*, but the manner that principle unfolds its energy we cannot explain.

Mr. Locke maintains that the soul does not receive all its impressions from matter : an immaterial soul has no occasion for material organs. The soul, they say, is frequently passive in sensation and perception ; and again, that the soul does not always think, whereas thought is essential to an immaterial substance. Thus they suppose every thing to be effect without cause, or without any



original, independent, active power or principle of energy and motion.

It was universally held, that the soul and the body acted physically on each other ; Descartes, the Newton of France, first shewed that the heterogeneity of their nature did not admit of such real union, and that they could only have an apparent one, of which God is mediator. Leibnitz says, a soul is to have a certain series of thoughts and desires ; a certain series of motion belongs to the body, which is a mere machine ; that is determined by the combination of its mechanical disposition with the impressions of external objects.

Even Voltaire, whose life was covered with moral infamy, and whose object was to render himself immortal by immorality and impiety, died as he was born in the catholic faith. In fact, if you destroy the idea of these two essential points in the mind, you reduce man and his boasted attributes to the mere animal, and lay the foundation of anarchy and confusion. Pascal justly says, the religious will at least be better prepared for that change, which all must anticipate, than others. To Socrates it sweetened the cup of poison : in a word, it is as indispensable to stamp on the human mind the belief of a future state, as it is on the existence of a Deity. Weaken in the human heart these inspiring sentiments, these harmonizing principles, these indissoluble links of social right, you assist in demoralizing man, and stem the glowing ardour of that patriotism, whose commanding effect inspires him with a love of country, and every gene-



rous desire, that tends to promote civil right among his fellow men. Is no law abrogated, when you timidly isolate yourself from society, and abandon life, e'er the horizon of futurity opens its resplendent line of demarcation to your view? Look, Suicide, look around; the tomb is situated on the confines of both worlds; have ye no fear of ensuing darkness? Stay a moment longer on the awful verge, grapple with your fatality, arrest but a second the convulsive hand, a lucid moment may come, and the outcast return to society: for even in the impervious gloom of a dark and starless night, a night dark as Erebus, and hideous as Cerberus, a volume of dishevelled light may point the precipice's declivity, and avert impending danger from the wretched wanderer. And thus do I maintain it is not only our duty, but our interest, to support life as long as possible, and not prematurely solicit its mystic results: for life at best is but a school of probation, and the term of our servitude will work its own finale.

THE END.









